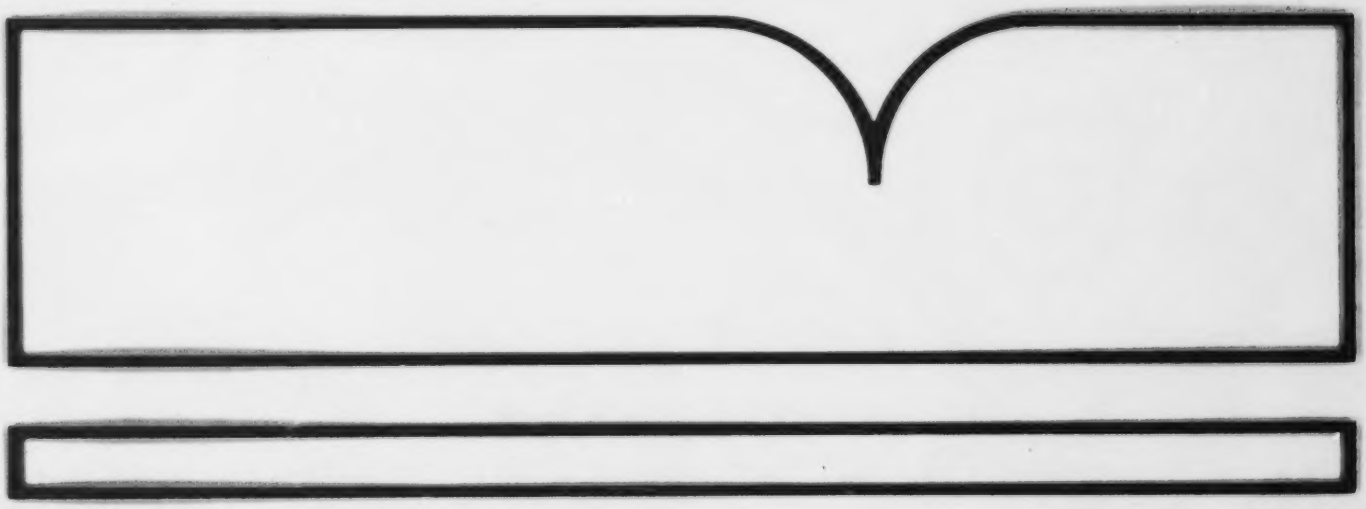
PB88-211685

Evaluating Sources of Indoor Air Pollution

(U.S.) Environmental Protection Agency
Research Triangle Park, NC

May 88



U.S. Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Service
NTIS

PB88-211685

EPA/600/D-88/086
May 1988

EVALUATING SOURCES OF INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Technical Information Service
SPRINGFIELD, VA. 22161

TECHNICAL REPORT DATA
(Please read Instructions on the reverse before completing)

1. REPORT NO. EPA/600/D-88/086	2.
3. RECIPIENT'S ACCESSION NO. PB88-211685/AS	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Evaluating Sources of Indoor Air Pollution	5. REPORT DATE: May 1988
	6. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION CODE
7. AUTHOR(S): B. A. Tichenor, L. E. Sparks, J. B. White, and M. D. Jackson	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NO.
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS: See Block 12	10. PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.
	11. CONTRACT/GRANT NO.: NA (Inhouse)
12. SPONSORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS: EPA, Office of Research and Development, Air and Energy Engineering Research Laboratory, Research Triangle Park, NC 27711	13. TYPE OF REPORT AND PERIOD COVERED: Published paper; 1/87-3/88
	14. SPONSORING AGENCY CODE: EPA/600/13

15. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES: AEERL project officer is Bruce A. Tichenor, Mail Drop 54, 919/541-2991.

16. ABSTRACT: The paper discusses a three-phase approach, employing environmental chambers, indoor air quality (IAQ) models, and test house experiments, that is effective in linking sources of indoor pollutants to measured concentrations. Emission factors developed in test chambers can be used to evaluate full-scale indoor environments. A PC-based IAQ model has been developed that can accurately predict indoor concentrations of specific pollutants under controlled conditions in a test house. The model is also useful in examining the effect of pollutant sinks and variations in ventilation parameters. Pollutants were examined from: (1) para-dichlorobenzene emissions from moth crystal cakes, and (2) particulate emissions from unvented kerosene heaters. However, the approach has not been validated for other source types, including solvent based materials and aerosol products.

17. KEY WORDS AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

a. DESCRIPTORS		b. IDENTIFIERS/OPEN ENDED TERMS	c. COSATI Field/Group	
Pollution	Emission	Pollution Control	13B	
Atmosphere Contamination Control	Chlorobenzenes	Stationary Sources		07C
		Indoor Air	06K	
Mathematical Models	Insecticides	Para-Dichlorobenzene		06F
	Kerosene	Moth Cakes	12A	21D
Test Chambers	Space Heaters	Particulate	14B	13A
Measurement	Particles		14G	

18. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: Release to Public	19. SECURITY CLASS (This Report): Unclassified	21. NO. OF PAGES: 17
	20. SECURITY CLASS (This page): Unclassified	22. PRICE: A03 12.95

EPA Form 2220-1 (9-73)

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INTRODUCTION

Evaluation of indoor air pollution problems requires an understanding of several factors, including:

- the source of the indoor pollutants;
- emission characteristics of the source;
- air exchange between the building and the outside;
- air movement within the building;
- interaction of the pollutant with surfaces within the building (i.e., sink effects); and
- chemical or physical interactions affecting the pollutant concentration.

Knowledge of these factors would allow investigators of "sick buildings" to perform a systematic assessment of possible sources within the building and to determine their potential for causing the levels of pollutants measured within the building.

Scientists and engineers in the Indoor Air Branch of EPA's Air and Energy Engineering Research Laboratory in Research Triangle Park, NC, are conducting research to increase the state of knowledge concerning these factors. A three phase program is being implemented:

1) Environmental chambers are used to provide source emission factors for specific indoor pollutants;

2) An IAQ (Indoor Air Quality) model has been developed to calculate indoor pollutant concentrations based on the chamber emission data and the air exchange/air movement within the indoor environment; and

3) An IAQ Test House is used to conduct experiments to evaluate the model results.

The purpose of this paper is to show how this coordinated approach can be used to evaluate specific sources of indoor air pollution. Pollutants from two sources are examined:

a) para-dichlorobenzene emissions from moth crystal cakes; and

b) particulate emissions from unvented kerosene heaters.

IAQ MODEL

The IAQ model estimates the effect of HVAC systems, outside air exchange, room-to-room air movement, sources, and sinks on indoor air pollutant concentrations.[1] The model's present configuration allows up to 10 rooms and assumes that all rooms are completely mixed. It runs on IBM PCs (and compatibles) and provides a menu-driven user interface.

The pollutant concentration in a room is calculated by a mass balance of the various pollutant flows. For a single room:

Amount in - Amount out + Amount produced - Amount removed = Amount accumulated

The analysis can be extended to multiple rooms by writing a system of equations for each room. The amount of air entering a room from all sources (the HVAC, outside, and other rooms) must equal the amount of air leaving the room.

The various mass balances discussed above can be used to write a set of linear differential equations. These equations can be solved using many techniques. The simplest technique is the Euler method. The equation for Room 1 becomes:

$$\Delta C_1 = \Delta t/V_1(C_2Q_{2-1} + C_0Q_{0-1} - C_1Q_{1-2} - C_1Q_{1-0} + S_1 - R_1) \qquad (1)$$

Likewise, for Room 2 the following equation applies:

$$\Delta C_2 = \Delta t/V_2(C_1Q_{1-2} + C_0Q_{0-2} - C_2Q_{2-1} - C_2Q_{2-0} + S_2 - R_2) \qquad (2)$$

where,

C_1 and C_2 are the concentrations in Rooms 1 and 2, t is time, V_1 and V_2 are the volumes of Rooms 1 and 2, Q_{1-2} is volumetric flow rate from Room 1 to Room 2, Q_{0-1} and Q_{0-2} are the volumetric flow rates from the outside into Rooms 1 and 2, Q_{2-1} is the volumetric flow rate from Room 2 to Room 1, Q_{1-0} and Q_{2-0} are the volumetric flow rates from Rooms 1 and 2 to the outdoors, S_1 and S_2 are the source terms for Rooms 1 and 2, and R_1 and R_2 are the removal (sink) terms for Rooms 1 and 2. The initial conditions are: at $t=0$, $C_1=C_{i1}$, and $C_2=C_{i2}$ where C_i is the initial concentration. The concentration at any time t can be found by stepping through the solution a small time step, Δt, at a time.

An important feature of the model is its ability to simulate variations in building air flows. The air flows generated by a building's air handling system are generally several times larger than natural air flows. Thus when an HVAC system is on, the building air flows are dominated by the HVAC system. Air flow patterns in a building with the air handling system on may be significantly different from air flow patterns in the same building with the air handling system off. For example, many houses have a single return vent for the air handling system. When the air handling system is on, air flow is dominated by the flow to the return vent. When the air handling system is off, air flow is less directed. The on/off behavior of the air handling system is modeled by allowing two different air flow patterns to exist in the building: one is active when the air handling system is on, and the other when the air handling system is off. The model switches between these two patterns depending on the state of the air handling system. The state of the air handling system (on or off) is determined by a random number generator designed to ensure that the air handling system is on for a specified fraction of each hour. The air handling system may switch from on to off and back several times in an hour. This random switching appears to provide good modeling of actual air handling system behavior.

MOTH CRYSTAL CAKE EMISSIONS (PARA-DICHLOROBENZENE)

Small Chamber Tests

Small environmental test chambers were used to determine the emission rate of para-dichlorobenzene from moth repellant.[2] The EPA test facility consists of a clean air conditioning and delivery system, an incubator containing two 166 liter stainless steel environmental test chambers, and associated sampling manifolds. A permeation system for quality control is included. Temperature, humidity, and air exchange rate are monitored and controlled by a microcomputer. Organic analyses are conducted by gas chromatography (GC) using flame ionization detectors (FID).[3,4,5]

Half a cake of moth repellant (surface area = 55 cm^2) was used for each test to simulate the manufacturer's recommended usage. Environmental parameters were chosen to reflect typical residential conditions. Frequent sampling of the chamber exhaust during the initial stages of the test was required to observe the rapidly changing concentrations, followed by a reduction in frequency as the concentration leveled off. Once the analyst felt that the concentration was stabilized, sampling was discontinued.

The moth repellant was a relatively pure chemical compound, para-dichlorobenzene. An internal standard, hexane, was added to the sample stream through a port in a 1 liter glass mixing flask just downstream of the test chamber. Samples were taken from a glass manifold connected to the mixing flask. Sampling occurred by drawing a portion of the air stream through a heated valve (175°C) equipped with dual calibrated sampling loops or by drawing a sample from the manifold with a 5 cc gastight syringe. In each case, the sample was injected into a 2.4 m (8 ft) long by 2 mm (0.1 in.) ID stainless steel gas chromatograph (GC) column packed with 1% SP-1000 on Carbopack B (60/80 mesh). Data were collected on a microprocessor-based data station running software developed specifically for GC. The output signal from the FID was digitized and stored for further processing.

Table I presents the results of the moth crystal cake chamber experiments. The last column provides the emission factor for para-dichlorobenzene.

There is substantial evidence that the interior surfaces of the chamber acted as a sink for the para-dichlorobenzene. After completion of tests MC10 and MC11, efforts were made to determine the amount of para-dichlorobenzene that remained on the chamber walls. These efforts involved carefully washing the chamber walls with methanol (i.e., the first step in the chamber cleaning process) and recovering the solvent. The volume of solvent was measured, and an aliquot injected onto the GC column for analysis. The results confirmed that material was adsorbed on the walls. For test MC10, about 160 mg of para-dichlorobenzene was recovered from the walls, while about 23 mg was recovered for MC11. The final average concentrations for these two tests were 5,300 and 1,170 mg/m^3, respectively. Thus, a substantial amount of material was adsorbed on the chamber walls during the experiments, and this amount appeared to be related to the vapor-phase concentration.

Test House Experiments

A single-story frame house with three bedrooms, two baths, den, kitchen, and living/dining combination was leased for use as a test house. The house has a gas forced-air heating system, is 8 years old, and is well insulated. The age was selected to provide a house in which the original materials had outgassed. A garage along one end of the house provides a convenient instrumentation room.[6]

Moth crystal cakes containing para-dichlorobenzene were placed on the closet shelf in the corner bedroom. Five cakes were used, based on the manufacturer's recommended usage. The cakes were placed on the closet shelf and had an exposed surface area of 570 cm^2. The house temperature was maintained at 25°C to represent summer conditions. The HVAC fan was operated continuously. The closet doors were closed; all other interior doors in the house were open. The air exchange rate for the house was 0.35 hr^{-1}, based on SF_6 tracer measurements.

Samples were taken in the closet, the adjoining bedroom, the master bedroom, and the den. All samples were collected by airtight syringe and analyzed by electron capture/gas chromatography. Samples were collected on days 4, 6, 8, and 11. The moth crystal cakes were removed on day 11 and sampling continued on days 12, 14, 16, and 18. The results are presented in Table II. The data indicate that, at any point in time, concentrations of para-dichlorobenzene were relatively constant throughout the house, except in the closet where the moth crystal cakes were located. This indicates that the house was well mixed, as would be expected with the HVAC fan operating.

The results for days 12 through 18 show that para-dichlorobenzene is still being emitted, even though the moth crystal cakes were removed on day 11. This indicates that the house surfaces acted as sinks during the first 11 days and began re-emitting para-dichlorobenzene when the primary source was removed. If the decay were caused exclusively by dilution and flushing, it would only take about 13 hours (at an air exchange rate of 0.35 hr^{-1}) for the concentration of para-dichlorobenzene to fall below 1% of the value recorded when the cakes were removed. The data clearly show much higher values even after 7 days, suggesting the presence of a residual source.

The emission factor for the moth crystal cakes was estimated by weight loss over the test period. For an initial weight of 601 g and a final weight of 397 g, a weight loss of 204 g was observed. Given an exposed surface area of 570 cm^2 and a total exposure time of 264 hrs (11 days), the emission factor was 1360 mg/cm^2-hr. This compares favorably with the small chamber emission factor of 1400 mg/cm^2-hr (see test MC4 in Table I).

IAQ Model Analysis

Both the chamber testing and the test house results indicate that interior surfaces act as sinks for the para-dichlorobenzene emitted from the moth crystal cakes. Since the IAQ model requires a sink term to accurately predict indoor concentrations, calculations were made to determine the magnitude of the sink effect in the test house. The data on para-dichlorobenzene concentration and the average emission factor can be used to estimate the sink effect. The analysis is based on treating the house as a single chamber. The mass balance for the entire house at any time, t, gives:

$$dc/dt = E(t) - Qc_t \quad (3)$$

where, dc/dt is the change of para-dichlorobenzene concentration in the house as a function of time, E(t) is the emission rate (which may be a function of time), Q is the airflow through the house, and c_t is the concentration in the house at time t. The equation can be rearranged to allow calculation of E(t):

$$E(t) = dc/dt + Qc_t \quad (4)$$

An effective emission rate, $E_e(t)$, was obtained by smoothing the concentration data using a robust regression analysis[7] and then calculating dc/dt from the smooth curve. $E_e(t)$ was then calculated for various times. An average effective emission rate was calculated from the $E_e(t)$ curve. The average effective emission rate was 480 mg/hr. This compares with an average emission rate of 800 mg/hr based on the weight lost by the moth crystals during the experiment [i.e., (1.4 mg/cm^2-hr)x(570 cm^2)]. The difference between the emission rate calculated from the weight loss and the effective emission rate calculated from the house concentration data is the sink term. Thus, 40% of the emissions [(800 - 480)/800 = 0.4] go to the sink.

Initial model runs with the sink term and estimates of the room-to-room airflows were in reasonable agreement with the measurements for all rooms except the closet. The predicted closet concentrations were high by a factor of 13. Also, the den and master bedroom concentrations were somewhat low relative to the corner bedroom concentration. Additional model runs showed that the flow from the closet to the corner bedroom was the key unknown parameter for determining the para-dichlorobenzene concentrations in the house.

Therefore, experiments were conducted to define the airflows in the test house and to estimate the type of mixing. During these experiments, the air-handling system flows were measured. Flow visualization studies to determine the nature of the in-room and room-to-room mixing were conducted with neutral density balloons and with neutral density helium bubbles. The measured flows of the air-handling system are shown in Table III. The balloon and bubble experiments showed that, even with the air-handling system off, considerable mixing existed between rooms. These experiments also indicated that there was a substantial airflow into and out of the closet. Finally, the visualization studies indicated that there was flow between the closet and the hallway and between the closet and the master bedroom.

Hot-wire anemometer measurements were made of the airflow velocities through the cracks in the closet door. These measurements showed that the airflow into and out of the closet was between 4 and 9 m^3/hr.

Model calculations were performed with the input data from the experimental studies. The input data for the model run are shown in Table IV. The model calculations were stopped after several hours of simulated time because steady-state was reached. The results of this run are shown in Table V. The agreement between the model and the measured data is excellent for all rooms. The measured values shown in Table V are the average concentrations for each room over the 4 days of sampling when the moth crystal cakes were in the closet.

UNVENTED KEROSENE HEATER EMISSIONS (PARTICLES)

Large Chamber Tests

The kerosene heater characterization was conducted in the large scale 34 m^3 environmental test chamber at the J. B. Pierce Foundation Laboratory, New Haven, CT.[6] Twelve heaters were borrowed from the Consumer Products Safety Commission, including: five radiant (R), three convective (C), three combination convective/radiant (C/R), and one radiant/radiant (R/R). The R/R design also included a ceramic catalytic disk above the concentric radiant elements.

The test group included both new and used heaters of the same type produced by the same manufacturer. With the exception of a single comparison run, all heaters were fueled with the same 1-K kerosene fuel whose composition had been previously determined by an independent testing laboratory. No effort was made to maltune any of the heaters to obtain "worst case" scenarios.

The characterization strategy consisted of two phases. Phase I was a general screening step. In this phase, each heater was fueled outside the chamber and subsequently placed in the chamber on a Potter scale to measure fuel consumption. The heater and the chamber were allowed to equilibrate for 0.5 hr while the mixing rate was established and chamber background levels for key parameters were measured. The heater was then fired up and run continuously for 6 hr. During the run, the heater was cycled through the range of fuel consumption/operational settings (i.e., high, low, and normal) that are expected to occur during normal residential use. The actual control settings were determined visually based on the manufacturer's recommendations included with each heater.

Particle size and distribution were measured using an electrical aerosol analyzer, a condensation nuclei counter, and an optical particle counter. Integrated mass samples were collected using eight portable pumps distributed around the chamber sampling at 1 l/min and an Andersen PM-10 sampler. The latter was modified to include an XAD cartridge to facilitate the collection and measurement of semivolatiles. The particles were collected on Teflon-backed glass fiber (Pallflex) filters for gravimetric analysis and bioassay. Volatiles were collected in Summa canisters for GC/MS analysis. Measurements of NO_x, SO_x, CO, CO_2, and total hydrocarbon were recorded via continuous monitors. The decay of CO_2 at the end of a run was used to calculate the chamber ventilation rate as well as to provide a measure of reactivity of the other parameters. Only the particle data are reported in this paper.

For each chamber run, the concentration in the chamber was calculated by:

$$G = (C_{eq} - C_o) \times (Q_v + Q_a + Q_r) \qquad (5)$$

and

$$EF = (G/F) \times 1000 \qquad (6)$$

where,

G = generation rate (mg/hr)
C_{eq} = measured steady state concentration (mg/m^3)
C_o = measured ambient/background concentration (mg/m^3)
Q_v = chamber ventilation rate (m^3/hr) based on the measured CO_2 decay rate
Q_a = removal rate by surfaces (m^3/hr) estimated from decay rates of continuously monitored gases
Q_r = effective removal rate of contaminant by collection method being used (m^3/hr)
EF = emission factor (ug/g)
F = fuel consumption (g/hr)

Four heaters were chosen for the intensive Phase II characterization based on pre-established criteria designed to select the heater from each category with the largest particulate mass production. These heaters were prepared for testing as in the Phase I screening, and the same parameters were measured. However, in Phase II they were operated for 12 hr at a normal flame setting, rather than cycled.

The particle emission factors based on the portable pump samples for both the Phase I and II characterizations are contained in Table VI, which also includes emission factors based on fuel consumption (ug/kJ). Taken as a whole, the particulate data available to date indicate that unvented kerosene space heaters are a strong source of indoor respirable suspended particulates. Particle size distribution measurements indicate that the particles produced by all kerosene heaters are less than 2.0 um in diameter, with the peak volume occurring around 0.15 um. The largest mass production occurs during start-up. Total mass concentrations ranged from 73 to 721 ug/m^3. The greatest mass emissions were produced by the multiple radiant design that incorporated the catalyst. Since only one heater of this design was tested, it is not known whether the high levels are a function of design or are related to the heater's past history.

Test House Experiments

Two heaters were taken from the intensive Phase II characterization and placed in the test house for further characterization. These heaters, one convective/radiant (C/R) and one radiant/radiant (R/R), were chosen because they represented the newer generation of kerosene heaters and included the highest emitter of particles.

The heater to be tested was placed in the den. One window was opened 2 in. (5 cm) to provide outside ventilation as recommended by the heater manufacturer. The air exchange under these conditions was 0.5 hr^{-1}. The HVAC system was not operated during the test. Particulates were sampled in the den, in the bedroom farthest from the den, and outside the house. The samples were collected on Pallflex filters using 4 cfm (113 l/min) samplers. Filters were changed every 6 hr and the total sampling time was 12 hr.

The test house particulate results are shown in Table VII. The R/R heater produced about 4 times as much particulate as the C/R heater, which is consistent with the emission rate data obtained in the chamber studies.

IAQ Model Analysis

The general strategy for modeling the kerosene heater experiments was the same as used for the moth crystal studies. Initial model runs were made with the emission factors (ug/kJ) developed in the chamber studies and the fuel consumption data from the test house experiments. The air infiltration was assumed to be 0.5 hr^{-1} based on SF_6 measurements in the test house with a window open 2 in. (5 cm). Room-to-room air flows were assumed to be 5 air changes per hour (ACH).

The results of the initial model runs were in fair agreement with the experimental data. However, the predicted concentrations for all cases were higher than the measured concentrations which suggests a particle sink. An estimate of the sink effect was obtained by reviewing indoor particulate work by Offermann, et al.[9] They conducted chamber studies and measured the sink effects due to the chamber. For the particle diameters of interest in the kerosene heater study, their data indicated that the sink should collect between 10 and 20% of the emitted particulate matter. A sink factor of 20% was used in subsequent model runs.

Table VIII presents the results of the model predictions. The predictions agree closely with the measured values for the R/R heater and are within 1 standard deviation (based on sampling) for the C/R heater.

CONCLUSIONS

A three phase approach employing environmental chambers, IAQ models, and test house experiments is effective in linking sources of indoor pollutants to measured concentrations. Emission factors developed in test chambers can be used to evaluate full scale indoor environments. A PC-based IAQ model has been developed that can accurately predict indoor concentrations of specific pollutants under controlled conditions in a test house. The model is also useful in examining the effect of pollutant sinks and variations in ventilation parameters. Further validation of the approach is required for other source types, including solvent based materials and aerosol products.

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Table I. Small chamber test results for para-dichlorobenzene emissions from moth crystal cakes

Test No.	Temperature (°C)	Relative Humidity (%)	Air Exchange Rate (hr^{-1})	Emission Factor (mg/cm^2-hr)
MC7	23	20	0.25	1050
MC4	23	20	0.50	1400
MC3	23	20	1.0	1600
MC6	23	50	0.25	1200
MC8	23	50	1.0	1500
MC14	23	50	2.0	1800
MC9	35	20	0.25	4200
MC10	35	50	0.25	4000
MC11	35	20	1.0	5000
MC12	35	50	2.0	5900
MC13	35	50	0.50	4300

Table II. Test house results for para-dichlorobenzene emissions from moth crystal cakes

Day	Closet (mg/m^3)	Corner Bedroom (mg/m^3)	Master Bedroom (mg/m^3)	Den (mg/m^3)
4	107	4.72	3.49	3.84
6	53.6	4.41	3.50	3.30
8	70.9	5.51	4.18	3.80
11	63.0	5.61	4.23	4.02
12	5.43	2.11	2.07	1.80
14	1.53	0.90	0.98	Lost
16	1.30	0.52	0.65	0.45
18	0.97	0.42	0.55	0.45

Table III. Test house ventilation system flows

Room	Measured Flow (m^3/hr)
Den	679
Middle bedroom	38
Corner bedroom	278
Master bedroom	280

Table IV. IAQ model input data - moth crystal cake analysis

Variable	Value
Source strength	1.4 mg/cm^2-hr
Air exchange with outside	0.35 hr^{-1}
Air exchange between closet and bedroom	4 m^3/hr
Air circulation due to HVAC system	Table III
Sink term	40%

All airflow to air-handling system is from hallway.
Air exchange with outside is evenly divided between rooms.

Table V. Comparison of measured test house concentrations of para-dichlorobenzene with IAQ model predictions

Room	Measured Value (mg/m^3)	Predicted Value (mg/m^3)
Closet	74	74
Corner Bedroom	5.1	5.7
Master Bedroom	3.9	4.0
Den	3.7	4.0

Table VI. Particle emission factors for Phase I & II characterization of unvented kerosene space heaters

Heater Type	Phase I (ug/g)	Phase I (ug/kJ)	Phase II (ug/g)	Phase II (ug/kJ)
C	55	1.3	38	0.9
C/R	47	1.1	42	1.0
R	58	1.3	45	1.0
R/R	218	5.0	376	8.7

Phase I emissions factors based on cyclic operation over 6 hr.
Phase II emission factors based on normal operation over 12 hr.

Table VII. Test house results - particle emissions from unvented kerosene heaters

Test	Location	Sample Size (n)	Average Conc. (ug/m^3)	Standard Dev. (ug/m^3)	Range (ug/m^3)
C/R Htr	Outside	6	28.4	19.1	12.3 - 65.9
	Den	6	70.9	17.3	46.4 - 91.6
	Bedroom	6	37.9	20.1	13.1 - 65.2
R/R Htr	Outside	6	29.1	7.1	17.8 - 36.8
	Den	6	288.3	42.1	225.0 - 366.8
	Bedroom	6	252.0	52.9	181.7 - 330.7

Table VIII. Comparison of test house particle concentrations with IAQ model predictions

Heater Type	Location	Measured Value (ug/m^3)	Predicted Value (ug/m^3)
C/R	Den	71	60
	Bedroom	38	52
R/R	Den	288	285
	Bedroom	252	235